

Shalimar, Florida. The county provided a state of the art building designed to hold 500 students; however, the school did not have an official name, so the local newspaper held a countywide naming contest. After the votes were counted, Choctawhatchee High School was declared the winner. Choctawhatchee—derived from a Creek Indian word meaning “coming together”—was a fitting moniker for a school that would unite students from all across Okaloosa County.

Choctawhatchee High School opened its doors on September 22, 1962 in Shalimar, Florida; however, after four years, the school had already exceeded its capacity, and the school relocated to its present location in Fort Walton Beach, Florida. From day one, Choctawhatchee established itself as an institution of academic excellence committed to educating each and every student. Nearly 20,000 students have graduated from the school since its opening, with many of them going on to achieve success in fields ranging from our military and space exploration to professional athletics and business.

Thanks to the dedicated support of teachers, staff, alumni and the entire community, Choctawhatchee has continued to excel and reach new heights. Today, the school offers the only International Baccalaureate program in Okaloosa County, Florida, more than a dozen Advanced Placement classes, an aviation program offered in partnership with Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, dual enrollment college courses with Northwest Florida State College, computer and electrical engineering programs in conjunction with the University of West Florida, as well as a successful Air Force Junior ROTC program.

Choctawhatchee also has a long and successful athletics program. In fact, the school's tradition of having a student ride a horse onto the field prior to football games served as the inspiration for a similar tradition at Florida State University. Whether it is on the playing field or in the classroom, Choctawhatchee High School's commitment to excellence has served as an inspiration and point of pride for the entire Northwest Florida community.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the entire United States Congress, it is an honor for me to rise today to recognize the 60th anniversary of Choctawhatchee High School. The Mayor and City Council of Fort Walton Beach have declared Friday, September 21, 2012, as Choctawhatchee High School Day. My wife Vicki and I join the entire Northwest Florida community in congratulating Choctawhatchee High School on their 60th anniversary and wishing them continued success.

HONORING MISSION EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL

HON. SILVESTRE REYES

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 21, 2012

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the achievements of Mission Early College High School. Mission Early College was recently honored with the 2012 National Blue Ribbon award from the United States Department of Education for excellence in education.

The National Blue Ribbon School award honors both public and private elementary,

middle and high schools where students achieve at high levels and also schools where the achievement gap is narrowing. Since 1982, more than 6,700 of America's schools have received this coveted award.

I want to personally congratulate the teachers, administrators, and staff of Mission Early College High School for their commitment and dedication to our young students in El Paso. This year only 269 schools nationwide received the award, and a ceremony in Washington, D.C. will honor their achievement. The Blue Ribbon validates the efforts of these schools in creating a positive and effective learning environment. These schools and their communities have achieved a degree of excellence of which they can justifiably be proud.

Mission Early College is a fine example of what can be accomplished when parents, teachers and administrators collaborate to prepare our students for a prosperous future. By emphasizing the importance of leadership, hard work, and dedication, Mission Early College is enabling a new generation of community leaders. In fact, upon completion of their high school career at Mission Early College High School, students not only graduate with a high school diploma, but can also earn up to 60 hours of college credit and an associate's degree. This opportunity for excellence and achievement is giving many students an early and critical exposure to college academics.

In times of economic uncertainty, we cannot lose sight of the paramount importance of our children's education, and I am honored to represent Mission Early College High School.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MARTIN HEINRICH

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 21, 2012

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. Speaker, on September 14, 2012, I unfortunately missed four votes, which included rollcall Nos. 581, 582, 583 and 584.

If I had been present, I would have voted “yes” on rollcall vote 581.

If I had been present, I would have voted “yes” on rollcall vote 582.

If I had been present, I would have voted “yes” on rollcall vote 583.

If I had been present, I would have voted “no” on rollcall vote 584.

RECOGNIZING THE RENTON HOUSING AUTHORITY

HON. ADAM SMITH

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 21, 2012

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the Renton Housing Authority and congratulate them on the successes of the Sunset Area Community Revitalization Program. The commitment of all who work with the Renton Housing Authority has been instrumental in providing quality, affordable, and safe housing options for low-income individuals and families.

The Renton Housing Authority was established in 1941 to provide middle and low-in-

come workers affordable housing near the Boeing B-29 and PACAR Sherman Tank manufacturing lines. In 1959, the Renton Housing Authority constructed Sunset Terrace.

The Sunset Area Community Revitalization Program is focused on the redevelopment of the Sunset Terrace public housing project. This effort is an important community enhancement that will help all residents of Renton, Washington have a safe place to call home.

The Sunset Area Community Revitalization Program will also receive a 2012 VISION 2040 Award from the Puget Sound Regional Council. This award is given to projects that are finding solutions to the Puget Sound region's expected growth, specifically projects that promote the well-being of our communities and economic vitality.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor that I recognize the valuable contributions of the Renton Housing Authority. The organization's dedication to helping people in our communities is laudable.

CONCERNS FOR ECUADOR

HON. DAVID RIVERA

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 21, 2012

Mr. RIVERA. Mr. Speaker, I am gravely concerned about the deteriorating human rights situation, democratic shortcomings, and increased drug trafficking in Ecuador.

Corruption, inefficiency, and political influence have plagued the Ecuadorian judiciary for many years. In a referendum held in May 2011, President Rafael Correa obtained a mandate for constitutional reforms that could significantly increase government powers to constrain media and influence the appointment and dismissal of judges. President Correa continues to weaken the democratic electoral process by appointing government supporters as authorities in all branches of government.

Ecuador's Criminal Code has provisions that restrict freedom of expression and government officials use these laws against the ruling party's critics. The “desacato” (lack of respect) clause enables the Ecuadorian government to imprison and prosecute anyone who offends the president or a government official.

President Correa has taken action to strengthen trade relations with Iran, a U.S.-designated State Sponsor of Terrorism. Iran has reduced tariffs for seven Ecuadorian products as well as signed an agreement to supply oil products during 2012 and 2013 to Ecuador. President Correa has expressed his desire to continue trading with Iran and bilateral visits between Correa and Iranian dictator Mahmoud Ahmadinejad occur frequently.

With its location between the two largest cocaine producing countries in the world, Peru and Colombia, Ecuador is a major transit country for narcotics. Ecuador's porous borders and increased participation in the drug trade makes the country very vulnerable to organized crime. Counternarcotics cooperation with the United States is and should remain a major focus of U.S. assistance to Ecuador.

Recently I met with Sociedad Ecuatoriana del Exterior (SEDE), an organization dedicated to fostering freedom and democracy in Ecuador and promoting the wellbeing of Ecuadorian-American citizens. I am asking for